



News Release

Communications New Brunswick

Human Rights Commission

Hampton Elementary School to receive Human Rights Award (00/12/04)

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FREDERICTON (CNB) -- The New Brunswick Human Rights Commission has chosen the Hampton Elementary School as the recipient of the 2000 Human Rights Award for its production of the play *Peace Cranes 2000*.

Senator Noël Kinsella will present the award during a ceremony beginning at 2 p.m. on SUNDAY, Dec. 10 in the Hampton High School, Hampton.

The play is an original full-length children's musical with the theme of peace and human rights. It was produced five times in March 2000 by about 180 students of Hampton Elementary School, with the help of several parents and staff members. The musical focuses on the life and times of Dr. John Peters Humphrey, the former Hampton resident who wrote the draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

"The Hampton Elementary School production of *Peace Cranes 2000* is an excellent model for promoting human rights and equality," said Dr. Patrick Malcolmson, chair of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission. "It effectively taught elementary school students about universal human rights and equality by appealing to them at their level of understanding and interest."

"The staff, parents and students of the school volunteered hundreds of hours producing this play, and the dedication of teachers Anne Scott and Donna Veniot in writing, directing and rehearsing the play was exceptional," Malcolmson said.

Peace Cranes 2000 was written by Anne Scott and directed by Donna Veniot, who are music teachers at Hampton Elementary School. The play links the life of John Humphrey with the true story of Sadako Sasaki, a Japanese girl who developed leukemia at the age of 12 as a result of the Hiroshima atomic bomb. In hopes of ensuring world peace, Sadako decided to make 1000 paper cranes, since, according to legend, this would make her wish come true. In the play, Humphrey has a futuristic dream that in six scenes illustrates some of the rights and freedoms mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The play uses scenarios that elementary school students encounter regularly, such as bullying, taunting and shunning.

When asked why she wrote the musical, Scott said, "First of all, I believe that making music together is a life-enriching experience. Secondly, since putting on a musical requires many devoted hours, it is important to me to make the theme meaningful."

"As a concerned human being, I believe that it is crucial to teach others about peace and justice," Scott said. "In the words of John Humphrey, there is a very close connection between respect for human rights and peace."

Until his death in 1995 in Montreal, Humphrey was an influential figure in the field of human rights worldwide. In addition to being the main author of the Universal Declaration, he was the Director of the United Nations' Human Rights Division from 1946 to 1966. He later helped establish Amnesty International Canada and the Canadian Human Rights Foundation.

The Human Rights Award was established by the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission in 1988 to mark the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The award is presented each year around Dec. 10, Human Rights Day, which is the anniversary of the Universal Declaration. The award is given to a New Brunswick individual or group that has shown outstanding effort, achievement and leadership on a volunteer basis in the promotion of human rights and, as such, serves as an example to all New Brunswickers.

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MEDIA CONTACTS: Dr. Patrick Malcolmson, chair, New Brunswick Human Rights Commission, 506-453-2301; Anne Scott, author of the play, 506-832-3787; Donna Veniot, director of the play, 506-832-3340. More information about the Human Rights Commission is available at the following Web site: <http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/>

00/12/04

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